

DEPARTEMENT TOEGEPASTE ECONOMISCHE WETENSCHAPPEN

ONDERZOEKSRAPPORT NR 9803

COLLABORATING TO DESEGREGATE A BLACK SCHOOL: HOW CAN A LOW POWER STAKEHOLDER GAIN VOICE?

by

M. JANSSENS

K. SEYNAEVE



Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Naamsestraat 69, B-3000 Leuven

ONDERZOEKSRAPPORT NR 9803

**COLLABORATING TO DESEGREGATE A BLACK SCHOOL:
HOW CAN A LOWER POWER STAKEHOLDER GAIN VOICE?**

by

M. JANSSENS

K. SEYNAEVE

COLLABORATING TO DESEGREGATE A BLACK SCHOOL:
HOW CAN A LOW POWER STAKEHOLDER GAIN VOICE?

Maddy Janssens
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Department of Applied Economics
Naamsestraat 69
3000 Leuven
Tel: 32-16-326874
Fax: 32-16-326732
Email: maddy.janssens@econ.kuleuven.ac.be

Katrien Seynaeve
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Department of Applied Economics
Naamsestraat 69
3000 Leuven
Tel: 32-16-326893
Fax: 32-16-326732
Email: katrien.seynaeve@econ.kuleuven.ac.be

COLLABORATING TO DESEGREGATE A BLACK SCHOOL:
HOW CAN A LOW POWER STAKEHOLDER GAIN VOICE?

This longitudinal action research examines a black school's process of desegregation. Based upon stakeholder, desegregation and collaboration theory, the school's segregated mode was analyzed through understanding its identity as it was constituted in its stakeholders' network and assessing the incentives to collaborate among the different stakeholders. As a way to gain voice, the interventions were oriented towards shifting the school's network boundaries and creating personalized relationships with stakeholders around an educational curriculum in which heterogeneity itself had a function. According to the 'ethics of care' principle, stakeholders shared responsibilities for the needs of all pupils.

In most multicultural societies, education has been and still is segregating minority children from the indigenous white children by assigning them to separate schools and refusing access to other schools. Although there is strong evidence that segregation is disadvantageous for minority children in terms of educational achievement and social participation (Fase, 1994; Glenn & de Jong 1996), it continues to be a sociological reality (Glenn & de Jong, 1996). In Flanders, the Dutch speaking region of Belgium, 10% of pupils in the Flemish education system are of non-Flemish origin. They are children of immigrants from Southern Europe, Turkey, Morocco, former African Belgian colonies, central and eastern Europe. The majority of them are concentrated within the so-called 'black' schools or schools that consist of more than 50% non-Flemish children. Statistics show that approximately 100 schools out of 2,400 in Flanders consist of 80% of non-Flemish pupils and that within the entire primary school sector, 50% of them are educationally retarded.

This study is the result of a longitudinal action research conducted in such a black school, focused on the process of desegregation. It was set up in light of the Non Discrimination Charter, declared by the Flemish educational authorities in 1993, in order to facilitate the integration of the minority children in the Flemish society. The two objectives of the charter were to create a more conscious attitude with respect to discrimination in schools and to realize an admission policy in such a way that migrant pupils are proportionally present in the different schools of a particular community. This form of desegregation can only happen in a voluntary way since the Flemish education system is characterized by competition among schools and freedom of choice. In Belgium, any school that meets certain quality standards is being subsidized and parents can send their children to the school they prefer. This means that subsidized schools form a competitive school market system in which they try to differentiate from each other in terms of curriculum and achievement in order to attract pupils. Consequently, black schools that want to desegregate need to convince Flemish parent to send there children to them. However, parents do often choose a school in terms of the social or ethnic composition of the school as an indirect indicator of quality education (Tesser et al., 1995). Therefore, black schools that want to desegregate will need to attract pupils by offering parents more direct signals of quality in terms of alternatives on curriculum, instruction methods, school organisation, and interaction with parents.

The major purpose of this study is to understand the process of a black school's desegregation. In order to do so, we first examine how the segregated mode of the school was being sustained through the type of stakeholder interactions and the school's identity. Second, we examine the initial incentives to collaborate among all stakeholders as a way to achieve desegregation. In order to support the implementation of the Charter, the government mandated the creation of a local committee in each city consisting of school principals and the schools' organizing authorities. Their task is to achieve desegregation within their community through stimulating collaboration among the different schools in the form of negotiating an admission policy for the different schools. Such an admission policy often takes the form of setting limits with respect to the number of minority pupils in all schools. Since the black school in this study operates within such agreements, this study examines to what extent the agreements made within the mandated coordinated network will stimulate collaboration among the different schools and to what extent they will help the black school to desegregate. Finally, we discuss the interventions that were oriented towards breaking through the segregation mode and gaining voice in the underorganized network of desegregation. Such interventions were oriented towards creating a decategorized education curriculum and collaborating in a personalized way with external stakeholders.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND ITS THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this particular action research we were involved in working closely with the members: the principal and teachers of the black school, offering pre-school and primary school education, located in a city near Brussels. At the beginning of the study, in October 1995, the school had about 70 pupils between 3 and 6 (early childhood education) and about 100 between 6 and 12 years old (primary education), the latter being 100% of non-Flemish origin. Their parents are all first wave immigrants, mainly from Morocco and Turkey. The study demanded an integral involvement by us as researchers in an intent to bring change in the school over a matter which was of genuine concern to the school. Since the Non Discrimination Charter indicated the disappearance of black schools over time, the school was forced to redesign her way of working and attract Flemish pupils in order to survive.

Our interventions were reflective of a 'participatory' approach towards action research (Whyte, 1991). The key distinguishing feature of this approach is the combination of the notion that some members of the organization being studied actively participate in the research process rather than just be subjects, with the central principle of action research that there should be an intent to take action based on the intervention (Whyte, 1991). As it is the case here with desegregation, participatory action research is often driven by concerns for the emancipation and empowering of underprivileged groups and individuals and for the kind of social change which seriously questions the dominant values within society (Eden & Huxham, 1996).

As a necessary role of the research, we were concerned with enhancing action and generating positive energy in the school at the moment of action and within their specific context. However, we believe that the action research outcomes can go beyond the level of being tightly bound by context. As a purpose of the study we are also concerned with the building and extension of theory of a more general use and with implications beyond those required for action within the domain of the project. As well as being usable in everyday life, the aim of this research is to value theory, with theory elaboration and development as an explicit concern of the research process (Eden & Huxham, 1996). In this paper, we are not only concerned with a single theory, but try to build a conceptual and theoretical framework in which each theory must be understood in the context of other related theories. To understand the process of desegregation and the interventions made in the black school, we will draw upon three different theoretical perspectives that are inextricably linked: stakeholder theory, desegregation and collaboration.

Stakeholder theory was used as the overall theoretical framework to fully capture the complexity of the problem domain of desegregation. The principle of understanding an organization within its network of relationships was applied towards understanding the identity of the segregated school as it was created through its relationships with its stakeholders. We will further examine which moral principles e.g. 'ethics of justice' versus 'ethics of care', govern the interactions in the mandated network. Finally, stakeholder theory guided the succeeding interventions in moving the school team outside their original network, making them able to rethink their relationships with their stakeholders and to build new relationships with new stakeholders.

Desegregation literature in specific (Brewer & Miller, 1984) and social identity theory in general (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) provide a second relevant framework for this action research. The intended goal of the Non Discrimination Charter was not simply to redistribute members of different social categories but to promote intergroup acceptance and to reduce the role that category membership plays in creating barriers to individual social mobility and to the development of positive interpersonal relationships. This goal is consistent with desegregation literature in which the question is raised how interpersonal relationships can be decategorized (Brown, 1996; Hewstone & Brown, 1986). This theoretical perspective will therefore be used to further understand the initial position of the black school and its interpersonal relations with its stakeholders and to guide the interventions towards moving away from category-based education to personalized relationships with the pupils and other stakeholders.

Another relevant framework is collaboration. Since the problem domain of desegregation is indivisible (Aldrich, 1977) - that is it cannot be resolved unilaterally by any single organization, solutions require the collaborative efforts of several organizations (Gray, 1985; 1989; Wood & Gray, 1991). The Flemish government did recognize this need since they installed the local committee as a way to coordinate the domain. The question however that raises is to what extent this mandated coordinated network is successful in achieving the goals of desegregation. Collaboration literature is used to assess the initial conditions and incentives to collaborate among the different school parties in order to achieve desegregation and to guide our interventions in setting up relationships with external stakeholders.

We will start by discussing the segregation mode of the black school. We examine the black school's identity and assess the preconditions for collaboration among the different stakeholders. We then raise the question of how a less-powerful organization can gain voice with respect to the problem domain of desegregation. We will present the succeeding interventions guided by stakeholder, desegregation and collaboration theory. To conclude, we will reflect upon the action focused interventions in terms of further theory development.

SEGREGATION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF CONVERGENT BOUNDARIES AND LOW POWER

Stakeholder Theory as Overall Framework

Throughout its existence, stakeholder theory has undergone different re-examinations and developments trying to more fully define and classify stakeholders and explaining how organizations function with respect to stakeholders' relationships and influences. The early formulations of the stakeholder concept (e.g. Freeman, 1984; Mason & Mitroff, 1981; O'Toole, 1987) all share the implicit premise that the basic identity of an organization is defined independent of, and separate from, its stakeholders. Organizations are here thought of primarily as autonomous entities, bounded off from their external environment which they seek to enact and control (Wicks, Gilbert & Freeman, 1994). This autonomous conception implies that the organization is seen as the centre of a network of stakeholder relationships and that stakeholders are relating to the focal organization in a bilateral relationship. Recently, different scholars have formulated critique towards the idea of the focal organization having dyadic relationships. They stress the need to view the organization as one participant among many in the network of stakeholder relationships and to account for all relationships - also among the different stakeholders (Burton & Dunn, 1996; Gray & Wood, 1991; Rowley, 1997).

This critique has been taken up in a recent re-interpretation of the stakeholder concept. Wicks and colleagues (1994) present a relational approach to stakeholder theory viewing an organization's identity as manifest within an entire network of stakeholders and a broader social context. They propose that "the corporation is constituted by the network of relationships which it is involved in with employees, customers, suppliers, communities, business and other groups who interact with and give meaning to the corporation" (Wicks et al., 1994, p. 483). Stakeholders are placed within the domain of the organization implying that an organization is able to make stakeholders' changing needs, wants and expectations also part of the organization. In this interpretation, the internal/external distinction is no longer relevant but fade into a sense of communal solidarity. Stakeholders are considered to be concrete real people and groups who have particular relationships not only with 'the' organization but with other stakeholders as well.

Besides the conceptualization of an organization, stakeholder theory has discussed considerably its justification in terms of moral grounding (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Parallel to the two different conceptions as discussed above, one has argued for the importance of two normative cores or ethical principles. The bilateral model of stakeholder theory is perceived to be built on the principles of 'ethics of justice', whereas the relational interpretation is found to be grounded in 'ethics of care'. The principles of 'ethics of justice' are derived from different moral theories like Kantian deontology (1964), utilitarianism (Bentham, 1988) and justice theory (Rawls, 1971). From this ethical perspective, others are regarded as equally and with impartiality. No person has natural rights that others do not possess. Others are seen as threats, so rights, used to protect the boundaries between the self and others, become of prime importance. The resulting moral theories tend to be legalistic or contractual in nature, emphasizing stakeholder's rights and power. They posit universal standards of equality and justice with all others requiring that we will not consider ourselves or anyone else as having more rights to happiness or justice than any others.

In contrast, the moral principle of 'ethics of care' stresses the importance of examining the impact of one's decisions on others (Burton & Dunn, 1996). This principle is based upon Carol Gilligan's work (1982) in which a mode of moral reasoning is derived from the way we define our self as connected, joined to others in a web of relationships. Because the self has relationships that are inherent in and cannot be separated from its existence, rights are less important than the responsibilities people have to assist each other within the context of relationships. Instead of the 'rules of the game', the dynamics and expectations involved in relationships are central (White, 1992; Dobson & White, 1995). This ethical outlook is much more situational and contextual. It is only in the process of personally engaging with the particular other that we can gain specialized knowledge of their context, history and needs that permits us to fully care for them. Because of this knowledge people are partial towards other humans. The inherent relatedness of humans under 'ethics of care' forces people to examine the impact of their decisions on the others (Burton & Dunn, 1996).

These differences in moral grounding have however profound implications towards stakeholder management. Those organizations who operate under an 'ethics

of justice' approach will find themselves directly in competition with others that are all, protecting and seeking to further their own interests (Wicks et al., 1994). The autonomous 'self-centered' organization will try to control the actions of other stakeholders, which are seen as threats. Stakeholder management involves weighting or balancing the merits of various competing interests, pursuing those which are most compelling or beneficial and working to resolve conflict. In contrast, a 'caring' perspective on stakeholder theory implies that the expectations involved in stakeholder relationships and the responsibilities to the other stakeholders become central. Other stakeholders are no longer seen as threats and the concepts of conflict and competition are replaced by the notions of communication and collective action (Wicks et al., 1994). A more cooperative, caring type of relationship between stakeholders seems to be promoted. Stakeholders are not discussed in abstract categories but as concrete real people. Through knowledge of the stakeholders' perspectives, organizations are forced to examine the impact of their decisions on them. The question that become of importance is the effect a decision has on a particular stakeholder.

In this study, we take the relational approach of stakeholder theory in order to assess the initial situation of the black school. We examine the school's identity as it is constituted in its relational network with school counsellors, the migrant community, the migrants association, the school's organizing authorities, and white schools. The assessment of the initial situation also involves the analysis of the agreements made by the local committee in terms of the type of moral principles and consequently, the incentives to collaborate among the stakeholders with respect to desegregation.

Identity of Black School within its Network of Relationships

In order to fully capture the complexity of the problem domain of desegregation, we tried to understand how the school's identity was reproduced within its network of stakeholders' relationships. In interviews with two school counsellors, the school's representative of the organizing authorities, and the chairperson of the migrants association, these stakeholders described their experiences with the black school as well as with other stakeholders. In the following figure, we present the pattern of interactions among the different stakeholders involved.

Insert Figure 1

The school counsellors who provide the black school educational support, interact also with other schools outside the city. Through these contacts with a variety of schools, they see a variety in ways of educating. However, trying to bring advice to the black school seemed a difficult task. One counsellor stated that every advice about other ways of educating minority children led to refusal and defensive reactions by the school team. Another counsellor, trying to work in a particular class according to another didactic method, felt humiliated by the reactions of the teacher. In general, the relationship between the school team and the educational counsellors seemed to be characterized by rejection from the school side.

The interview with the school's representative of the organizing authorities described the relationship between the black school and the other white schools in the city. This person doesn't represent only the black school but also other Catholic schools in the city and interacts with other representatives of other organizing authorities. From these interactions, he learned how the other schools prefer to have a black school in the city. The white schools, depending on their relationship with Flemish parents for their existence and their status, favor the black school as she is. Recently, there is a tendency for not only Flemish parents to take their children away from black schools - the so-called 'white flight' - also non-Flemish parents prefer schools with a majority of Flemish pupils - the so-called 'black flight'. But as long as there is black school in town which accepts minority children, the danger of the black flight is less threatening to the white school meaning they can keep their status in the eyes of the Flemish parents. Their relationship to the black school is one of happily tolerating the school's segregated way of working.

The interview with the chairperson of the migrants association indicated the black school's relationship with the migrant community. The purpose of the migrants association is to act against racism and strive for emancipation of the migrant community. They have close relationships with the minority parents not only through actions in the socio-economic area (employment, housing, poverty) but also through their responsibility of integrating minority pupils into the education system. For instance, they provide counselling in language through translating documents and

school-parents contacts, and in pedagogic issues such as sensibilizing pupils and parents on didactic methods and motivating them to study. The migrants association sees itself as having an intermediary function between the migrant parents and the schools in the city. It is in this role that they experience the black school as showing a lack of trust in their educational advice. For instance, the school team had expressed doubts about the correctness of the translations. The chairperson also argued that the school team's attitude towards the minority children doesn't facilitate integration into the community. They constantly emphasize the differences of the minority children in terms of religion, language, need for discipline and geographic mobility as a way to justify their way of education.

Based on these interactions, the school within its network can be described as a rather closed organization, rejecting and distrusting external advice while offering category-based education to minority children. This type of school is tolerated by the white schools since it allows the latter ones to focus on the Flemish children. This description can be further understood when comparing the specific descriptions the stakeholders gave about the school with the way the school team described themselves. This school image is based upon one day of observation in the school, interviews with the school principal and a group interview with the 15 teachers.

The school team itself described themselves as being a strong supportive and creative team. The teachers and the principal saw themselves as a highly cohesive group with open and informal communication. They support each other when there is a problem in a particular classroom and they jointly search for solutions. The school team also described themselves as being flexible and innovative with respect to their didactic approaches. Required handbooks are transformed and adapted to the level and interests of the minority pupils. They experiment on a continuous basis with self-developed didactic methods and they constantly exchange their experiences with each other. In their educational approach, they emphasize experiential-based learning, visual expression, creativity, sports and music.

This self-description of being a supportive and innovative team was seen as two necessary conditions for the realization of the school's goal which was entirely formulated in function of the minority children:

“Our task is to take care of children that didn't choose themselves to live in this society by giving them adjusted education that consists of didactic

(cognitive knowledge) as well as pedagogic (behavioral rules, hygiene, discipline, regularity) elements.”

“The school needs to adjust herself to the children, not the other way around.”

Through their interactions with the school, the different stakeholders all shared a contrasting description of the school’s goal orientation, the supportive climate and the school team’s innovativeness. While the school team formulated her strategy as taking care of migrant pupils and offering them adjusted education so that nobody drops out of the educational system, these stakeholders stated that:

“The school operates according to a colonial model, with a patronizing attitude and a directive style applying strict rules. Their expectations of the minority children are systematically low.”

The strong support of being a close team, supported by a democratic leadership of the principal, was perceived by the interviewed stakeholders as:

“A closed community with a very particular climate and a dominant autocratic leadership. There is not an open regime in the schools. Teachers need to obey the principal and are not allowed to give their own opinion. In fact, the principal indoctrinates the school team, having it firmly in her grasp.”

Finally, the development of the school’s own expertise concerning didactic and pedagogic issues, was seen as:

“The building of an impermeable shield around the school.”

“As external advisor you don’t feel accepted when trying to give your advice and contribution. The school is very skeptical about all types of external advice as they fear loss of ground.”

“The teachers and the principal don’t put their own identity into question and are looking only for partners that confirm their way of working.”

In sum, the contrasting identity of the black school between the school team itself and the other stakeholders suggests the existence of a closed organization and a school whose actions and interactions stress the distinctiveness of the minority group. In desegregation literature, this is called characterizing by convergent boundaries (Brewer & Miller, 1984). The group identity of the migrant pupils as described by the school team coincides on many dimensions. The characterizations of being Islamic, having another mother language, showing a lack of geographical mobility, and belonging to the lower economical class are used to stress the distinctiveness of the pupils and to justify the school’s segregated way of working. However, when social

category is so multiple determined, the probability is high that at least one cue to category identity will be relevant in almost any situation and interpersonal relations will become categorized (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The school's relationships with its stakeholders are closed which confirms the idea of category-based social interaction. So, the self-centered identity of the school as it is constituted in its stakeholders' network sustained the school in a segregation mode.

Initial Incentives to Collaborate and Desegregate

According to collaboration theory (e.g. Gray, 1985; 1989; Wood & Gray, 1991), the needs and interests with respect to a problem domain are not defined in terms of a single organization but in terms of the interdependencies among the stakeholders who are affected by an issue and who claim a right to influence its outcome (Trist, 1983). Initiating collaboration therefore hinges upon achieving acceptance along stakeholders of each other's right to participate to the problem domain. A stakeholder is viewed to have legitimacy when this individual or group is perceived by others to have the right and the capacity to participate (Gray, 1985). While the right derives from one's being influenced by the issues under consideration, the capacity of a legitimate stakeholder refers to one's possessing some degree of power over the domain. Actors with a right to participate are those impacted by the actions of other stakeholders and they become involved in order to moderate those impacts (Gray & Wood, 1991). However, to be perceived as legitimate, stakeholders must also have the capacity to participate. They must possess recognized expertise and skills, or control needed financial or informational resources. The question that arises is to what extent the local committee was able to reach agreements that reflect the interests of all different stakeholders - white and black schools with respect to desegregation.

The agreements made by the local committee were based on the principle that school population should reflect the demographic spread in the existing and established community. The negotiated local agreement is this city stated that all schools were required to have a specific percentage of non-Flemish children. However, the agreements stipulated not only a lower but also an upper limit of about 30% minority children. Since the total migrant population in this city is higher than

30%, this upper limit is not likely to lead to a demographic spread across the whole community. In order to defend this agreement, the schools are referring to the right of 'free education'. Comparing the Non Discrimination Charter with the negotiated agreement, one can argue that the Charter's underlying philosophy can be interpreted in terms of 'ethics of care' but that the implementation through the local committee is more characterized by a 'justice' approach. While the Charter stressed the responsibilities the different schools have towards the broader social goal of integration of minority children in the local community, the negotiated agreements focused on the rights and interests of the white schools instead of on their responsibilities to attract also non-Flemish pupils. It meets the concerns of the white schools, reassuring them that they will stay sufficiently 'white' in order to keep their status and attract Flemish pupils. Instead of stressing interconnectedness between the schools, requiring communication and collective action to realize the goals of the Non Discrimination Charter, the separatedness of and the boundaries between black and white schools became even more protected.

This type of agreement supports previous findings that, in mandated coordinated networks, philosophical compatibility with respect to the problem domain and power negotiations are found to be less significant because status differences among the stakeholders had already been established (Hall, Clark, Giordano, Johnson & Van Roekel, 1977; Van de Ven & Walker, 1984). Perceptions of legitimacy with respect to desegregation are in this case colored by the historical relationships among stakeholders in the education system. In their well-established interorganizational network of education, the power has resided with a group of powerful organizations (Perucci & Pilisuk, 1970) - the so-called elite white schools. The agreement therefore reflects mainly the interests and concerns of these powerful stakeholders which keep attracting the bright Flemish pupils. Its emphasis on rights and interests is characteristic of a 'justice' approach toward stakeholder interactions. This concern might even be endangered when too many minority children will join their school and Flemish parents interpret this as a decrease in quality. So, the powerful stakeholders are not concerned with the problem domain of desegregation and perceive little or no interdependence with other schools. They see themselves as separate from the other stakeholders in a hierarchical order that is established through the status differences and are constantly seeking to further their own interests. Even

more, it is likely that they will try to preserve their individual control over the domain by resisting collaborative interventions that aim to balance power among the stakeholders. Instead, the elite schools, seeking to further their own interests, find themselves directly in competition with the other stakeholders, trying to control their actions. The black schools are therefore the less-powerful stakeholders with almost no capacity to participate in the mandated coordinated network. The elite schools are not likely to give them the legitimacy to participate since this would mean sharing power and losing control over the domain (Gray & McCann, 1984; Gray & Hay, 1986). Because the power in the network is embedded in hierarchies, the voices of the less-powerful stakeholders tend to be excluded (Wicks et al., 1994).

A similar reasoning in social identity theory (Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) with respect to status differences confirms our interpretation. Here it is argued that systematic attempts to reduce or reverse existing status differences may threaten members of the initially high-status group, leading to active resistance and attempts to reestablish ingroup distinctiveness and positive status differentials. Simply eliminating status differentials runs the risk of arousing social competition aimed at reestablishing preexisting status differences, especially on the part of the high status group. So, the installation of the local committee as it was mandated by the government was more a threat to the elite white schools than a way to start collaboration among all schools with respect to the problem domain of desegregation. This is mainly due to the high power differences among the stakeholders leading the black school with no capacity to participate.

Conclusion

The assessment of the initial situation of the black school shows conditions that reinforce the school's segregation mode through its identity as it is constituted in its stakeholders network as well as through the agreements made in the mandated coordinated network. The school team has the tendency to differentiate the minority children from Flemish children by convergent boundaries. They treat the pupils as undifferentiated members in a unified social category stressing the distinctiveness of this group. The emphasis on these group differences is also reflected in the school's closed and distorted relationships with its stakeholders. Analyzing the negotiated agreement of the local committee has indicated the importance of the power

differences among the different schools in the community. Since the white high status schools apply the 'ethics of justice' as main moral principle and try to preserve control over the problem domain reassuring their own interests, they perceive no legitimacy for the black school to participate.

Given the segregated spiral of the low power black school, our following interventions were oriented towards building energy and power to reshape the school's relationships with its stakeholders. Collaboration literature points out that low power stakeholders who are trying to achieve voice in the domain may need to build their power base before they can gain legitimate status as a stakeholder. They first need to engage in power-building tactics to influence the problem domain and force the more powerful to acknowledge dependence on the less powerful (Gricar & Brown, 1981). Our following interventions are guided by the importance of gaining of shifting network boundaries and decategorizing stakeholders' interactions as a way to gain voice.

DESEGREGATION THROUGH CREATING NEW BOUNDARIES

The problem domain of desegregation in Flanders is a rather underorganized system meaning the degree of awareness is low or nearly non-existent (Brown, 1980; Gricar & Brown, 1981). It represents potential networks of organizations rather than already established networks. However, in installing a local committee consisting of school principals to reach agreements on ways to desegregate, one created a network of stakeholders drawn from the education system. Consequently, the status differences that were historically established in this network of relations were transferred to the problem domain of desegregation leading to self-interest behavior by the elite schools to reassure the status differential.

Given the low power status of the black school in the education system, we oriented our interventions toward the potential networks of other organizations interested in the problem domain of desegregation such as the local neighbourhood committee or socio-cultural organizations. Since interventions in underorganized systems become a process of creating boundaries where none - or only loosely defined ones - have previously existed (Gricar & Brown, 1981), our actions were focused on building new relationships with these stakeholders. The major challenge was to create a type of relationship that was consisted with the goals of desegregation. This meant

setting up processes whereby category-based social interactions would be replaced by social relations that are more interpersonally oriented (Brewer & Miller, 1984). However, before such interventions could take place, we needed to break through the category-based education and self-centeredness of the school.

Creating Awareness of Category-Based Education and Self-Centeredness

Since the school operated in a way which maintained and enhanced the migrants' group distinctiveness, our following interventions were oriented towards defreezing the school from her way of working. This was done by showing examples of schools who more or less succeeded in offering intercultural education and attracting a mix of children.

An initial questioning of their own way of educating was triggered by the story of a school who succeeded in moving from a small black school to a successful intercultural school. An interview with this school principal indicated to us the importance of a pedagogical curriculum in which heterogeneity is considered to be the basis of intercultural education and of establishing a network of relations with different non-school parties such as Flemish and migrant parents, the local neighborhood, and local shop-owners. This school had designed a pedagogic concept characterized by self-experiential learning, project work, music and creativity, personal responsibility and solidarity with others, multicultural education and participation of parents and the local neighborhood. This pedagogical curriculum was further implemented through participation of different parties. Work groups and committees consisting of different stakeholders were formed to work on issues such as a documentation center, pedagogical themes, and the organization of socio-cultural events. The illustration of this school's network structure is presented in Appendix.

Telling the school team this story created a first awareness of other possible ways of working and a belief in the potential of setting up processes to desegregate. After this 'success story', the school team became interested in other examples and possibilities and we sent them to other black schools that were in the process of redesigning their way of working. As preparation for these visits, we formulated interview questions focused on two major topics e.g. the nature and development of the educational concept, and the involvement of other stakeholders into the school. Through this intervention, the school team stepped out their own network of relations

and came in contact with a different network of stakeholders. They themselves generated 'data' to rethink their own way of working. Their visits to approximately 15 Flemish and Dutch schools resulted in different conceptions of education and ways of dealing with external parties. Since all examples were different from the school's situation but at the same time sufficiently related, the school team started to see another way of working.

In sum, starting the process of desegregation could take place by moving the school team outside their own network of relationships and confront them with examples of schools that were in the process of desegregation. Common to these schools was the focus on an educational curriculum in which categories between type of children were blurred and the involvement of external stakeholders in implementing the educational project. This intervention created a sense of awareness among the school members about their tendency to emphasize the distinctiveness of migrant children and their distorted way of interacting with stakeholders. The confrontation with other types of stakeholders' network was crucial since it was not threatening directly their own identity. In contrast, it showed potentialities to move in the direction of desegregation.

Differentiation and Personalization as Ways to Desegregate

The following interventions were more directly focused on changing the nature of the school itself. Given the category-based education of the black school, they were oriented towards creating processes of decategorization. This implies processes whereby category-based social interactions are being replaced by social relations that are more interpersonally oriented and therefore more consistent with the goals of desegregation (Brewer & Miller, 1984). According to Brewer and Miller (1984), the reduction of categorical responding should be associated with social interactions based on increased differentiation and personalization. Differentiation refers to the distinctiveness of individual category members within that category or the perception of intracategory differences. However, this does not necessarily imply the elimination of category boundaries that differentiate ingroup from outgroup. Personalization, on the other hand, involves responding to other individuals in terms of their relationship to the self, which necessarily involves making direct self-other interpersonal comparisons that cross category boundaries. Brewer and Miller (1984) argue that

differentiated and personalized interactions are necessary before intergroup contact can lead to intergroup acceptance and reduction of social competition. The following interventions resemble the underlying logic of these two processes.

Differentiation. Differentiation occurs when one learns information that is unique to individual outgroup members, allowing one to draw distinctions among them and organize them into smaller subgroups. Depending on the information received, such persons may be assigned to another, more appropriate category, or simply left uncategorized. Such differentiation may lead to responding differently to the reclassified individual (Brewer & Miller, 1984).

Initiatives were set up to create differentiation so that the community acquired information that differentiated the school from other black schools. For example, during social community events, the school opened its door for the public and offered food and drinks. This created the opportunity to show Flemish people (potential parents) the very good infrastructure and the nicely decorated class rooms of the school. The purpose of this initiative was to disconfirm the stereotype that black schools are dirty and uncared-for. Other initiatives were set up to give differentiated information about the migrant children themselves. The school organized exhibitions in which high quality and creative drawings, paintings and sculptures of the migrant children were shown. Another example refers to taking care of the Christmas decoration for the local neighborhood. In collaboration with the neighborhood committee, the school took care of the streets decorations by using the migrant childrens' work. The purpose of these types of initiatives were to give positive and appreciative information about the potentials of migrant children.

Since such differentiation does not necessarily eliminate the tendency to view this black school and their migrant children as being components of the larger social category of low quality black schools, the response to the original category may remain unchanged. This implied that other interventions were needed relying on the logic of personalization.

Personalization. Personalization encourages participants to attend to information that replaces category identity as the most useful basis for classifying each other. It reduces information processing and interaction decisions that are category-based and promotes attention to personalized information about others that is self-relevant and not correlated with category membership (Brewer & Miller, 1984).

Personalization is a way of decategorization which seeks to reduce the emphasis on categorical judgement with the ultimate aim of dissolving the problematic category boundaries altogether. In this way, it is hoped, the interactions will take place on an interpersonal level and the participants should be more likely to attend to idiosyncratic information about each individual and be less attentive to group based, stereotypic, information (Brown, 1996).

A similar reasoning is argued within the racial integration school literature (e.g. Glenn & de Jong, 1996; Verlot 1995) which argues that a multicultural school means not only desegregation but also offering integrated education. One has made a distinction between desegregation and integration after it was found that resegregation frequently occurred within desegregated schools through tracking, grouping practices, special education referrals, or disciplinary action. Desegregation is here used to describe the situation in which minority and majority pupils are physically together in a school or classroom, whereas integration is reserved for a social situation marked by mutual respect and equal dignity in an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement of distinctive cultural patterns (de Jong, 1996). Therefore, going from desegregation to integration means a shift from a pure instrumental mix of children to offering a quality educational project. Integrated education means formulating and implementing an educational project in which heterogeneity itself has a function. Quality of education then will not be derived from indirect indicators like social composition but will become visible by more direct indicators.

The next intervention was focused on designing a personalized educational curriculum. The identification of such a new curriculum started in a meeting in which the teachers shared their experiences of the school visits and discussed those elements that could of interest for a new curriculum. This meeting became a chaotic but energetic conversation not only about 'what was happening in the other schools' but also a start to envision 'what might be possible for our school in the future'. At the end of the meeting, we gave them the task to create a blueprint of a new pedagogical concept based upon the best of what they had found in the other schools linked to the strengths and possibilities of their own way of educating. The result was an educational curriculum oriented towards experiential based learning with the following pillars: intercultural education, creativity and music, sports, and project work. In this curriculum, heterogeneity itself has a function since the differences

between the pupils form the basis of education. For instance, intercultural education is being conceptualized by 'cooperative learning in a multicultural group'. In this form of project work, small teams of pupils work on different tasks related to one central theme. Teams are rotating to fulfill each tasks so interdependence among the teams and the opportunity to learn from each other are created. Inherent to this way of education is that individual differences are taken as starting point: different pupils learn to work together, they learn to accept and value others being different and having different contributions to the project work. Following the 'ethics of care' principle, there is attention to particular information about each individual instead of stereotypic information about a group of pupils.

Parallel with the design of the educational concept, a group of teachers were trying to build relationships with the local neighborhood committee and Flemish organizations. The purpose was to involve these stakeholders into the further design and implementation of the educational concept. For instance, the local theater school and liberal arts school were willing to cooperate in a creativity project. These parties come to the school and work closely with the migrant pupils.

Outcomes of Desegregation Process

While the school is continuing its efforts towards desegregation, the first reactions of different stakeholders indicated a positive effect for the school in terms of resources and attraction of Flemish children. In September 1996, the government administration approved the school's request for additional resources to support their desegregation efforts. This allowed the school to experiment with the new educational curriculum and continue to establish collaborative contacts in the local community during the school year of 1996-1997. In April 1997, the school presented its new educational project to the local community through brochures and a press conference. The result was broad local medium coverage and 12 parents interested in sending their 3-year old child to the school. Of those, 7 of them actually enrolled their children which meant the start up of a small mixed class of migrant and Flemish pupils. In September 1997, new additional resources were granted by the government. Currently, the school is working on explicitly involving the parents - both migrant and Flemish - into the school organization. While the school team had been focusing on building relationships with Flemish stakeholders, they now are bringing the minority

and Flemish parents of the mixed class together in order to start desegregation at this side.

The results at community level, however, show less positive effects. Although the black school established progress towards their own desegregation, their capacity to influence the other school parties in the local committee is still limited or non-existent. The white elite schools are currently trying to preserve their status and control through coalition building with extreme conservative migrant organizations. The purpose of this coalition is to set up a Islam school for migrant pupils. This way segregation would continue and the interests of the high status white schools would be served.

CONCLUSION

This longitudinal action research has focused on a black school's process to desegregate. First, the initial situation was assessed through the school's identity as it was constituted in its network of stakeholders' relationships and through an examination of the mandated committee's agreements in terms of principles of ethics. This analysis showed that the category-based and distorted relationships, the low power position of the school and the ethics of justice principle that governed the relationships in the mandated network were keeping the school in a segregated mode. In order to rethink their way of working, we moved the school out of its original network of relationships, exploring possibilities of ways to desegregate. Their own process of desegregation was characterized by providing differentiated information about the school and migrant pupils, and building new relationships with stakeholders interested in the problem domain of desegregation. These relationships were characterized by personalized interactions around an educational curriculum in which heterogeneity of pupils itself had a function.

Besides generating usable knowledge within this particular context, the study aims at further development of theory. Reflection upon the action focused interventions (Eden & Huxham, 1996) is focused on how a low power stakeholder can gain voice. A first important step in answering this question is to take a dynamic view on the organization and its stakeholders' network and consider the possibilities of shifting the boundaries of the network. Second, a low power stakeholder may gain

legitimacy by taking an ‘ethics of care’ perspective with respect to the problem domain and their relationships with potential stakeholders.

Traditionally, the underlying assumption of stakeholder theory is that all stakeholders are known. However, through examining a school’s desegregation process over time, it became clear that ‘who is a stakeholder’ cannot be defined a priori. Stakeholders are linked to a specific problem domain with each domain having a potential network of stakeholders. The legitimacy of a stakeholder is therefore also linked to the context of a particular network and the potential stakeholders’ relationships. Such a dynamic view on stakeholder theory suggests the importance and power of shifting boundaries of a network. In this study, changing the boundaries of the problem domain and therefore also the stakeholders’ network became an important way for the black school to gain power. In moving from the problem domain of education to desegregation, the school was able to create new boundaries and relationships in this underorganized network. While the interaction with the elite schools led to no legitimacy of the black school, stakeholders interested in desegregation accepted the legitimacy of the school to participate because of their designed educational curriculum in which heterogeneity itself had a function. In addition, shifting boundaries was an important characteristic of the intervention in which the school team went visiting other schools. Here, the school started to learn and to rethink their own way of working when moving outside their original network. Coming into contact with other stakeholders’ networks was less confrontational and threatening than direct advice and suggestions made by stakeholders of their own network. In sum, gaining voice as a low power stakeholder started by shifting boundaries of stakeholders’ networks through gaining insight from other stakeholders’ network as well as creating new relationships within an underorganized network.

Second, the study indicates the differential effect that the moral principles which govern the interactions among the stakeholders, have on gaining voice. While interactions based upon the ‘ethics of justice’ principle seems to ensure the existing power differential, the ‘ethics of care’ principle seems to stimulate equal power distribution and therefore collaboration. The analysis of the negotiated agreements of the local committee showed the underlying logic of ‘ethics of justice’ through which the high power stakeholders were able to keep control over the domain and defend their self-interest. Because the elite schools advocated the right to ‘free education’,

the black school was not able to influence the decision process with these stakeholders. This finding suggests that the 'ethics of justice' principle is more likely to be used by high power stakeholders as a way to ensure their power differential. Consequently, low power stakeholders will gain no power. This finding has also implications for collaboration theory. In general, we would expect that in collaborative settings the type of moral principle that governs the interactions will depend upon the power distribution among the stakeholders. Future research may focus on other context than desegregation in order to examine the relationship between the power differential of stakeholders and the type of moral principles that govern their interactions.

In contrast to the reinforcing power differential effect of the 'ethics of justice' principle, this study suggests that one can gain voice through building relationships according to the 'ethics of care' principle. In designing the new educational concept, the school started from the heterogeneity of the pupils themselves. Here, equality in education did not mean equal rights or equal treatment of all pupils, rather it required viewing each pupil as worthy of equal respect and consideration, and responding to the unique needs they bring with them. Involving other stakeholders in implementing this educational concept meant that both the school and these stakeholders took the responsibility to work on the needs of pupils. Through this way of working, the school could set up collaborative efforts and gaining legitimacy with respect to the problem domain of desegregation. The new stakeholders' relationships characterized by the 'ethics of care' principle were a way to gain voice for the school. This finding has further implications for becoming a multicultural school. We would expect that such a school would need to develop a sense of shared responsibility among different stakeholders for the integrated education of all pupils, minority and indigenous. It means creating a sense of ownership among the school, parents and local community while taking the needs of children as starting point. The challenge in creating a truly multicultural school seems to build on this sense of ownership and responsibility by creating those conditions in which the different stakeholders can begin to share experience and expertise, and to increase their understanding of all pupils' needs. From this a need for integration and quality education is likely to follow. More in general, this reasoning indicates that interpersonal relations may be decategorized by applying the 'ethics of care' principle. Future research may examine how other types

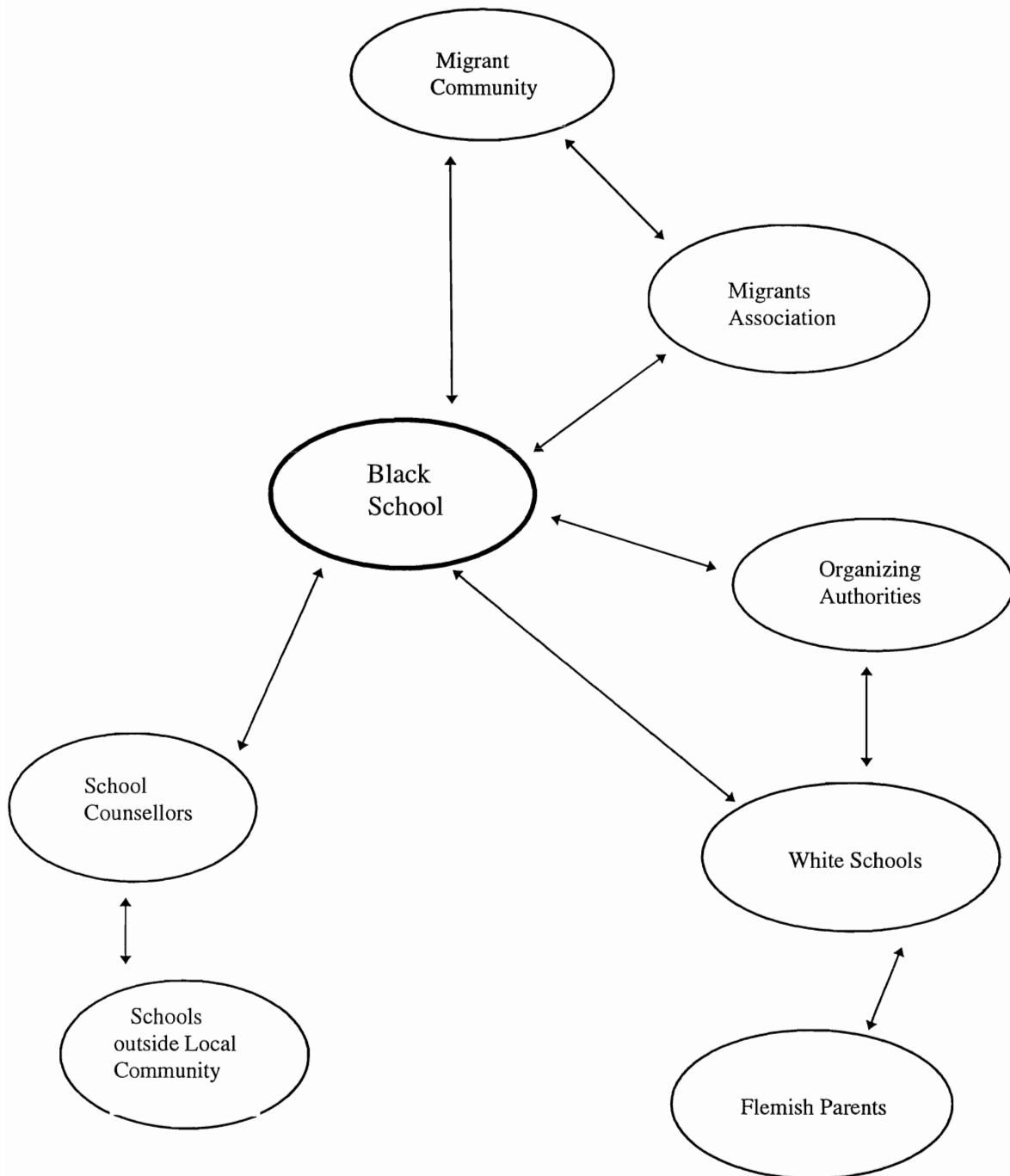
of intergroup relations can be personalized through emphasizing the shared responsibility for the needs of particular stakeholders.

Although the collaborative efforts among the stakeholders seem to be the highest when interactions are governed by the principle of 'ethics of care', we do not want to place caring and justice in opposition to each other (Burton & Dunn, 1996; Freeman, 1994). Rather this study suggests that care should be the foundation of an organization, with justice as superstructure. Here, the process of a desegregated school could start through emphasizing the shared responsibility of different stakeholders to take care of the needs of all pupils. While this caring perspective formed the basis of a new school identity, the future organization of the school is likely to include the formulation of a set of agreements. Such type of agreements are guiding principles serving as a reference frame for future way of working and provide continuity as individual stakeholders come and go (Wicks, 1996). The difference with the abstract rules and agreements from justice theory is that these agreements are embedded in the interactions among stakeholders focused on taking care of the needs of all pupils. However, reviewing and questioning this superstructure will be an ongoing process to ensure the contextual nature of the guiding principles and through this the continuation of the desegregation process.

To conclude, low power stakeholders may gain voice to affect a problem domain through shifting the boundaries of their network and building new relationships with new stakeholders. In governing these relationships according to 'ethics of care' or sharing responsibility for the needs of those who are off concern, a low power stakeholder may initiate collaborate efforts and be perceived as a legitimate stakeholder being able to contribute to the caring of others.

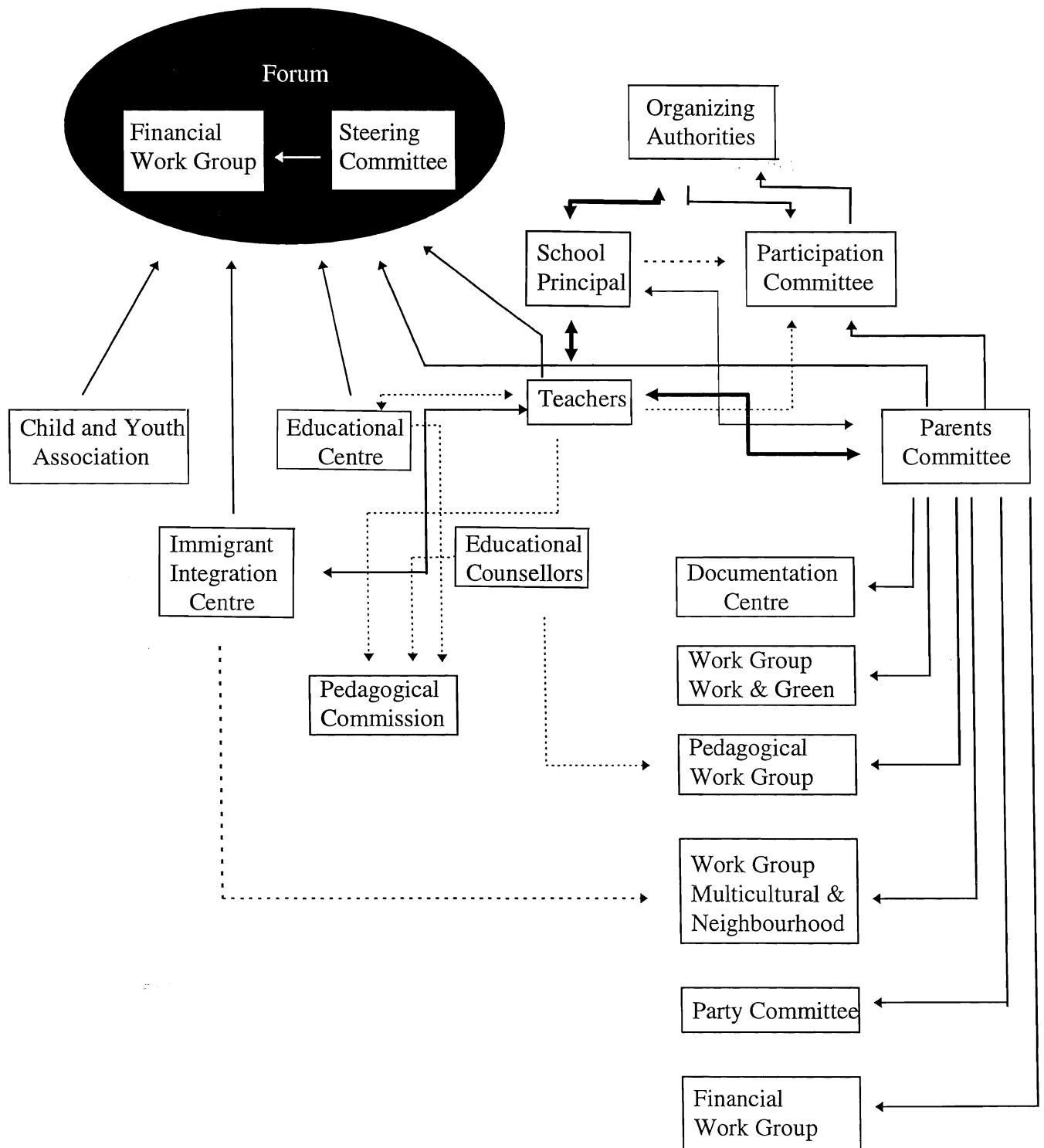
FIGURE 1

The black school within its network of stakeholder relationships



Appendix

Incorporating Stakeholders into a School's Structure



REFERENCES

- Aldrich, H.E. 1977. Visionaires and villains: The politics of designing interorganizational relations. **Organization and Administrative Sciences**, 8: 23-40.
- Bentham, J. 1988. **The principles of morals and legislation**. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.
- Brewer, M.B., & Miller, N. 1984. Beyond the contact hypothesis: Theoretical perspectives on desegregation. In N. Miller, & M.B. Brewer (Eds.), **Groups in contact. The psychology of desegregation**: 281-300. London: Academic Press.
- Brown, L.D. 1980. Planned change in underorganized systems. In T.G. Cummings (Ed.), **Systems theory for organization development**. New York: Wiley.
- Brown, R. 1996. Tajfel's contribution to the reduction of intergroup conflict. In W.P. Robinson (Ed.), **Social groups and identities. Developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel**: 169-190. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Burton, B. K., & Dunn C. P. 1996. Feminist ethics as moral grounding for stakeholder theory. **Business Ethics Quarterly**, 6(2): 133-147.
- de Jong, E.J. 1996. Integrated education for language minority children. In C.L. Glenn, & E.J. de Jong (Eds.), **Educating immigrant children. Schools and language minorities in twelve nations**: 503-576. New York: Garland.
- Dobson, J., & White, J. 1995. Toward the feminine firm: An extension to Thomas White. **Business Ethics Quarterly**, 5(3): 463-478.
- Donaldson, T., & Preston, L. 1995. The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence and implications. **Academy of Management Review**, 20(1): 65-91.

Eden, C., & Huxham, C. 1996. Action research for the study of organizations. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. Nord (Eds.), **Handbook of organization studies**: 52-543. London: Sage.

Eveling, P. 1996. **Non-discrimination charter in the education system of the Flemish community**. Case Study for the Council for Cultural Cooperation (CDCC).

Fase, W. 1994. **Ethnic divisions in Western European education**. Munster: Waxman.

Freeman, R.E. 1984. **Strategic management: A stakeholder approach**. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing Co.

Freeman, R.E. 1994. The politics of stakeholder theory: some future directions. **Business Ethics Quarterly**, 4(4): 409-422.

Gilligan, C. 1982. **In a different voice**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glenn, C.L., & de Jong, E.J. 1996. **Educating immigrant children: schools and language minorities in twelve nations**. New York: Garland.

Gray, B. 1985. Conditions facilitating interorganizational collaboration. **Human Relations**, 38(10): 914-936.

Gray, B., & Hay, T.M. 1986. Political limits to interorganizational consensus and change. **The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science**, 22(2): 95-112.

Gray, B., 1989. **Collaborating: Finding common ground for multiparty problems**. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gray B., & McCann, J.E. 1984. Power and collaboration in human service domains. Unpublished manuscript.

Gray B., & Wood, D.J. 1991. Collaborative alliances: Moving from practice to theory. **Journal of Applied Behavioral Science**, 27(1): 3-22.

Gricar, B.G., & Brown, L.D. 1981. Conflict, power and organization in a changing community. **Human Relations**, 34: 877-893.

Hall, R.H., Clark, J.P., Giordano, P.C., Johnson, P.V., & Van Roekel, M. 1977. Patterns of interorganizational relationships. **Administrative Science Quarterly**, 22: 457-474.

Hewstone, M., & Brown, R. 1986. **Contact and conflict in intergroup encounters**. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kant, I. 1964. **Groundwork of the metaphysic of morals**. N.Y.: Harper & Row.

Mason, R., & Mitroff, I. 1981. **Challenging strategic planning assumptions**. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

O'Toole, J. 1987. **Vanguard management: Redesigning the corporate future**. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Perucci, R., & Pilisuk, M. 1970. Leaders and ruling elites: The interorganizational basis of community power. **American Sociological Review**, 35: 1040-1057.

Tajfel, H. 1978. Social categorization, social identity and social comparison. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), **Differentiation between social groups**: 61-76. London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J.C. 1979. An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), **The social psychology of intergroup relations**: 33-47. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Rawls, 1971. **A theory of justice**. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Rowley, T.J., 1997. Moving beyond dyadic ties: A network theory of stakeholder influences. **Academy of Management Review**, 22(4): 887-911.

Tesser, P., Van Praag, C.S., van Dugteren, F.A., Herweijer L.J., & Van der Wouden, H.C. 1995. **Rapportage minderheden 1995, concentratie en segregatie**. {Report Minorities, 1995. Concentration and segregation}. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

Trist, E.L. 1983. Referent organizations and the development of interorganizational domains. **Human Relations**, 36(3): 247-268.

Turner, J.C., Hogg, M.A., Oakes, P.J., Reicher, S.D., & Wetherell, M. 1987. **Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory**. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Van de Ven, A.H., & Walker, G. 1984. The dynamics of interorganizational coordination. **Administrative Science Quarterly**, 29: 598-621.

Verlot, M. 1995. **School policy improvement and desegregation in relation to the local community**. Paper presented at the seventh Annual International Roundtable on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, San Francisco.

White, T. 1992. Business, ethics and Carol Gilligan's two voices. **Business Ethics Quarterly**, 2(1): 51-61.

Whyte, W. (Ed.). 1991. **Participatory action research**. London: Sage.

Wicks, A.C., Gilbert D.R., & Freeman R.E. 1994. A feminist reinterpretation of the stakeholder concept. **Business Ethics Quarterly**, 4(4): 475-497.

Wood, D.J., & Gray, B. 1991. Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. **Journal of Behavioral Applied Science**, 27(2): 139-162.

